

Diabetes *and* Managing Sick Days



If you have diabetes, you already know how important it is to take good care of yourself. But when you are sick, your body releases hormones to help fight off the infection, which can raise your blood sugar levels. The good news is there are steps you can take to decrease the chance of having a minor illness turn into something serious by being prepared with a sick-day plan.

Making a Sick-Day Plan

The American Diabetes Association recommends working with your doctor or a diabetes educator to create a written plan that includes:

- How often you should check your blood sugar levels.
- If and when you need to check for ketones.
- How to adjust your insulin or oral medication, if you need to.
- What foods and fluids to take during your illness.
- When you should call your doctor.

Staying on Track

Take your diabetes medication – Even when you are not feeling well, you still need to take your diabetes medication. Do not change your medication plan unless your doctor has told you to do so.

Follow your meal plan – If you are nauseous, vomiting or have diarrhea, you may not be able to follow your regular meal plan. Keep simple carbs nearby like regular Jell-O or popsicles to help keep your blood sugar up

if you are at risk for lows. Making sure your blood sugar stays in target is one of the best ways to help your body deal with sickness.

Stay hydrated – In addition to your normal meals, drink lots of non-caloric liquids to keep from getting dehydrated, especially water. If you're having trouble keeping water down, have small sips every 15 minutes or so throughout the day. Extra fluids will also help get rid of the extra glucose in your blood.

Pay attention to other medications – Some medications can affect your blood sugar even if they do not contain sugar, such as steroids, aspirin, decongestants, and antibiotics. Keep track of over-the-counter medications you are taking while you are sick in case you need to see your doctor.

Prevention

Reduce your risk of getting sick by washing your hands frequently, avoiding crowds during cold and flu season, and getting a flu shot. Being prepared for sick days can help you feel more confident in your ability to manage your diabetes.



Keep track of over-the-counter medications you are taking while you are sick.